

Objective:

# What led to the Roman Golden Age, Pax Romana? How did Pax Romana impact Rome, other regions, and later periods in history?

## Introduction

➡ **Directions:** Examine the images below and complete the accompanying activity.

The images below are of three modern structures that are descendants of innovations from Rome's Golden Age.

**Structure A**



New Era Stadium, where the Buffalo Bills American football team plays.

Source: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:RWS2014.jpg>

**Structure B**



A map of the New York State Thruway (seen in red) and a picture of it near Williamsville, NY.

Sources: <https://www.google.com/maps/@42.9511111,-78.8511111,15z>; <https://www.google.com/maps/@42.9511111,-78.8511111,15z>

The New York State Thruway is a road that extends from New York City in the southeast, north to Albany, and west to Buffalo and beyond to Pennsylvania.

**Structure C**



The Soldiers' and Sailors' Arch at Grand Army Plaza in Brooklyn, NY is a memorial to those who died fighting for the Union in the American Civil War.

Source: <https://www.google.com/maps/@40.6938889,-73.9711111,15z>

**1. Identify the purpose for each of the structures shown**

A

B

C

**2. Based on the structures shown, predict what innovations the Romans might have produced based on these modern-day versions.**

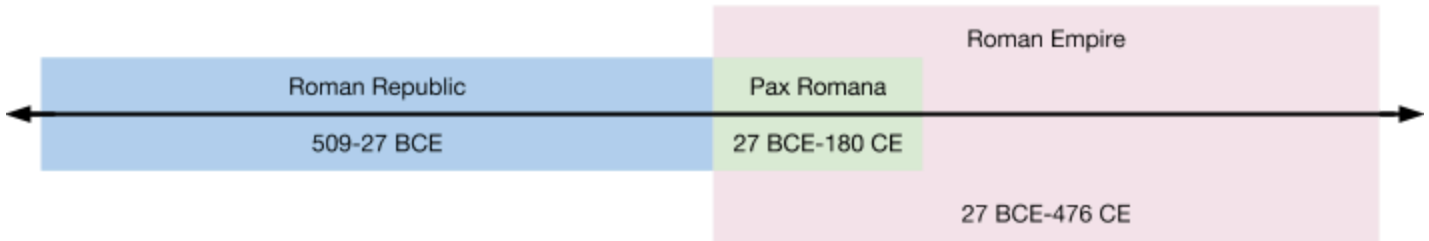


## Contextualize Pax Romana, the Golden Age of Rome

➔ Directions: Examine the timeline, text, and images below, then answer the questions below.

### Contextualize

#### Timeline of Roman History through the Classical Age



The assassination of **Julius Caesar**, the Roman dictator, in 44 BC led to two decades of civil war as rival leaders tried to take control of Rome. Eventually, Caesar's great nephew, **Augustus**, defeated his rivals and united Roman-controlled lands as the **Roman Empire**. He expanded Rome's borders to cover most of Europe and the areas of Asia and North Africa surrounding the **Mediterranean Sea**.

Augustus' rule (27 BCE- 14 CE) started a two-hundred year long **Golden Age** known as **Pax Romana**. *Pax Romana* means "**Roman Peace**" in Latin and is used to identify the years 27 BCE- 180 CE during which there were fewer wars than in any other period in Rome's history.

The empire **strengthened its central government, consolidated** its power, and created a **stable** condition in which **trade** and **communication** flourished. The empire protected and governed individual provinces, permitting each to make and administer its own laws while accepting Roman **taxation** and **military control**. Through state sponsorship, Romans made great achievements in architecture, engineering, and the arts.



Statue of Augustus, 1st Century CE.

Source: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pax\\_Romana#/media/File:Statue-Augustus.jpg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pax_Romana#/media/File:Statue-Augustus.jpg)



The Roman Empire at its height, during Pax Romana.

Source: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pax\\_Romana#/media/File:Roman\\_Empire\\_117AD.jpg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pax_Romana#/media/File:Roman_Empire_117AD.jpg)

1. Who united Rome after the death of Julius Caesar?
2. What does *Pax Romana* mean in Latin?
3. Why is *Pax Romana* considered a golden age?

## Exhibit A: Roman Arches and Domes

Roman architecture continued the legacy left by the earlier architects of the **Greek** world. For example, the Romans used Greek column styles and built their grandest projects from marble. However, the Romans were also great innovators and they quickly adopted new construction techniques, used new materials, and uniquely combined existing techniques with creative design to produce a whole range of new architectural structures such as **the dome** and **the arch**. Many of these innovations were a response to the changing practical needs of Roman society, and these projects were all **backed by the government which funded, organized, and spread them around the Roman world**, guaranteeing their permanence so that many of these great edifices survive to the present day.

### The Arch



The Segovia Aqueduct in modern-day Spain is a well-preserved example of how Roman engineers used arches to span long distances and support a great amount of weight on a structure.

### The Pantheon



A painting of the inside of the Pantheon's dome.

<http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Pantheon-panini.jpg>

The **Pantheon** is the best preserved building from ancient Rome and was completed in c. 125 CE. Its magnificent **dome** is a lasting testimony to the genius of Roman architects and as the building stands virtually intact it offers a unique opportunity to step back 2,000 years and experience the glory that was Rome.

Source: <http://www.ancient.eu/Pantheon/>

## Exhibit B: Roman Aqueducts & Roads

**Aqueducts:** These sometimes massive structures, with single, double, or triple tiers of arches, were designed to carry fresh water to urban centres from sources sometimes many kilometres away. The earliest in Rome was the Aqua Appia (312 BCE), but the most impressive example is undoubtedly the Pont du Gard near Nîmes (c. 14 CE). Romans used the arch to span rivers and ravines. They were constructed by the Roman legion who often spent more time as engineers building roads, bridges, walls, and aqueducts than in actual fighting.

Source: Adapted from "Roman Architecture." Ancient History Encyclopedia. [http://www.ancient.eu/Roman\\_Architecture/](http://www.ancient.eu/Roman_Architecture/)



Pont du Gard, a Roman aqueduct ruin in modern-day France.



**Map of Roman roads in Spain and Portugal**

Roman roads were a vital part of the development of the Roman state, from about 500 BC through the expansion during the Roman Republic and the Roman Empire. Roman roads enabled the Romans to move armies and trade goods and to communicate.

The Roman road system spanned more than 400,000 km of roads, including over 80,500 km of paved roads. When Rome reached the height of its power, no fewer than 29 great military highways radiated from the city. Hills were cut through and deep ravines filled in.

At one point, the Roman Empire was divided into 113 provinces traversed by 372 great road links. In Gaul alone, no less than 21,000 km of road are said to have been improved, and in Britain at least 4,000 km. There were footpaths on each side of the road.

The Romans became adept at constructing roads, which they called *viae*. They were intended for carrying material from one location to another. It was permitted to walk or pass and drive cattle, vehicles, or traffic of any description along the path. The *viae* differed from the many other smaller or rougher roads, bridle-paths, drifts, and tracks. To make the roads the Romans used stones, broken stones mixed with cement and sand, cement mixed with broken tiles, curving stones - so the water could drain, and on the top they used tightly packed paving stones.

The Roman road networks were important both in maintaining the stability of the empire and for its expansion. The legions made good time on them, and some are still used millennia later. In later antiquity, these roads played an important part in Roman military reverses by offering avenues of invasion to the barbarians.

## Exhibit C: The Colosseum



Watch an excerpt of [Where did it come from? Ancient Rome's Stadiums](#), read the text, and examine the image below.



**The Colosseum, Rome.**

Source: Photo by SHUTTERSTOCK/PT. Source: © 2019 All Rights Reserved by Shutterstock Inc. All Rights Reserved. Photo: Shutterstock

Roman theatres and amphitheaters were **inspired by the Greek versions**. The Romans added a highly decorative stage building (*scaenae frons*) which incorporated different levels of columns, projections, pediments, and statues. Theatres also display the Roman passion for enclosing spaces, especially as they were often (partially or completely) roofed in wood or employed canvas awnings.

The fully enclosed amphitheatre was a particular favorite of the Romans. **The Colosseum** is the largest and most famous, and it is a typical example

copied throughout the empire: a highly decorative exterior, seats set over a network of barrel vaults, and underground rooms below the arena floor to hide people, animals and props until they were needed in the spectacles.

**Concrete:** Roman concrete is durable due to its incorporation of volcanic ash, which prevents cracks from spreading. By the middle of the 1st century, the material was used frequently. Further innovative developments in the material, called the [Concrete Revolution](#), contributed to structurally complicated forms, such as the [Pantheon](#) dome, the world's largest and oldest unreinforced concrete dome.

Roman concrete was normally faced with stone or brick, and interiors might be further decorated by [stucco](#), [fresco](#) paintings, or thin slabs of fancy colored marbles. Made up of aggregate and cement, like modern concrete, it differed in that the aggregate pieces were typically far larger than in modern concrete, often amounting to rubble, and as a result it was laid rather than poured.<sup>[2]</sup> Some Roman concretes were able to be set underwater, which was useful for bridges and other waterside construction

Source: "Roman Architecture." Ancient History Encyclopedia. [http://www.ancient.eu/Roman\\_Architecture/](http://www.ancient.eu/Roman_Architecture/)

## Exhibit D: Roman Sculpture

Roman sculpture, with artists from across a huge empire and changing public tastes over centuries, is above all else, remarkable for its sheer variety and eclectic mix. The art form blended the idealised perfection of earlier **Classical Greek** sculpture with a greater aspiration for **realism** and absorbed artistic **preferences and styles from the East** to create images in stone and bronze which rank among the finest works from antiquity [the Classical Era]. Aside from their own unique contribution, Roman sculptors have also, with their popular copies of earlier Greek masterpieces, preserved invaluable works for the future which would have otherwise been completely lost to world art.

Source: "Roman Sculpture." Ancient History Encyclopedia. [http://www.ancient.eu/Roman\\_Sculpture/](http://www.ancient.eu/Roman_Sculpture/)



The *Dying Gaul*, sculpted from marble, is one of the best-known and most important works from Rome. The image above is a replica of one of the sculptures created to commemorate the victories over the Galatians in the 3rd and 2nd centuries BCE.

Source: [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Dying\\_gaul.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Dying_gaul.jpg)



Bronze statue of Roman Emperor, Marcus Aurelius, erected ca. 175 CE.

Source: [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Statua\\_Marco\\_Aurelio\\_Musei\\_Capitolini\\_Fronte2.JPG](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Statua_Marco_Aurelio_Musei_Capitolini_Fronte2.JPG)

## Exhibit E: Roman Mosaics

**Mosaic** is the art of creating images with an assemblage of small pieces of colored glass, stone, or other materials.

Mosaics have been found in **Roman** dwellings from **Britain** to Dura-Europos. Splendid mosaic floors are found in Roman villas across north **Africa**, in places such as **Carthage**, and can still be seen in the extensive collection in Bardo Museum in Tunis, Tunisia. The most famous mosaics of the Roman world were created in Africa and in **Syria**, the two richest provinces of the **Roman Empire**. Many Roman mosaics are found in Tunisian museums, most of which date from the second to the seventh century CE.

Source: "Mosaic." Ancient History Encyclopedia. <http://www.ancient.eu/Mosaic/>



A section of the Alexander Mosaic, a much larger Roman work depicting a battle involving the Greek general Alexander the Great created in Pompeii around 100 BCE.

Source: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:BattleofIssus333BC-mosaic-detail1.jpg>



A Roman mosaic depicting fish and vegetables hanging up in a cupboard, 2nd century CE.

Source: <https://www.ancient.eu/mosaic/2013/07/04/Mosaic-in-Pompeii-2/>



Mosaic showing musicians and battles between people and animals that took place in arenas like the Colosseum.

Source: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:TaciteArena.jpg>

## Exhibit F: Literature

The two most well known Roman authors were **Virgil** and **Cicero**. Their works, though completed before Pax Romana, were widely read during the golden age.

Virgil (70 BCE– 19 BCE) was regarded by the Romans as their greatest poet, an estimation that subsequent generations have upheld. His fame rests chiefly upon the ***Aeneid***, which tells the story of Rome's legendary founder and proclaims the Roman mission to civilize the world under divine guidance. His reputation as a poet endures not only for the music and diction of his verse and for his skill in constructing an intricate work on the grand scale, but also because he embodied in his poetry aspects of experience and behavior that transcend history.

Marcus Tullius **Cicero** (106 BCE– 43 BCE) was a Roman statesman, lawyer, scholar, and writer who vainly tried to uphold republican principles in the final civil wars that destroyed the Roman Republic. His writings include books of rhetoric, speeches, philosophical and political treatises, and letters.



Fresco of a couple in Pompeii, Italy holding a writing tablet and a scroll, ca. 20-30 CE.

Source: <https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Pompeii-couple.jpg>

Source: Adapted from "Ancient Greek Literature." New World Encyclopedia.  
[http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Ancient\\_Greek\\_literature](http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Ancient_Greek_literature)

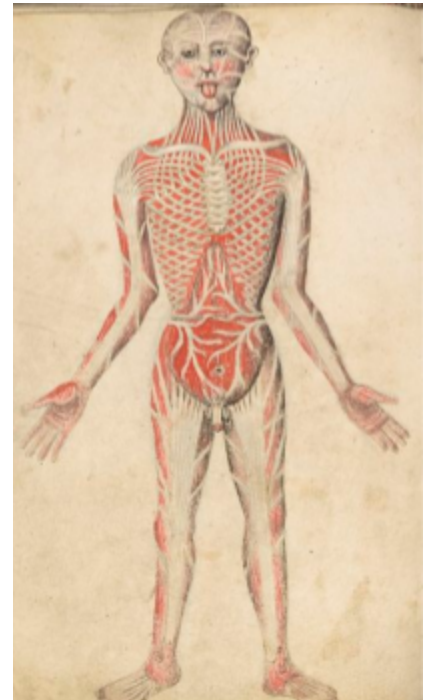
## Exhibit G: Roman Medicine

**Roman medicine** was greatly **influenced by earlier Greek medical practice and literature** but also made its own unique contribution to the history of **medicine** through the work of such famous experts like **Galen**. Whilst there were professional doctors attached to the Roman army, for the rest of the population medicine remained a private affair. Nevertheless, many large Roman households had their own medical specialist amongst their staff and with the spread of literature on the topic, access to medical knowledge became ever wider, treatments became more well known, and surgery became more sophisticated.

**Galen** (131-201) was a physician who learned about anatomy through the dissection of apes and pigs, clinical observation, and thorough examination of patient and symptoms. Galen was **forbidden by Roman law to dissect human corpses**, so his knowledge was limited to what he could learn from other animals and outward examinations of the bodies of dead gladiators and hanged criminals.

Sources: "Roman Medicine." Ancient History Encyclopedia.

[http://www.ancient.eu/Roman\\_Medicine/](http://www.ancient.eu/Roman_Medicine/); <http://www.wdl.org/en/item/9712/#q=galen>;  
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/gcsebitesize/history/shp/ancient/romanknowledgerev1.shtml>



*'Muscles Man', A drawing based on Galen's books about anatomy but drawn by someone else.*

Source: [http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:'Muscles\\_Man'.Pseudo-Galen,\\_Anathomia:\\_WMS\\_290\\_Wellcome\\_L0034577.jpg](http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:'Muscles_Man'.Pseudo-Galen,_Anathomia:_WMS_290_Wellcome_L0034577.jpg)